

**PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**

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INTERNET <http://www.ptb.ca.gov>**CLARIFICATION OF SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST  
WHEN SUPERVISING A PHYSICAL THERAPY AIDE**

*How is “continuous and immediate” and “in close proximity” interpreted functionally in reference to supervision of the physical therapy aide by the physical therapist?*

To ensure a physical therapist is providing continuous and immediate supervision of the physical therapy aide, it is essential for the supervising physical therapist to be in close proximity to the physical therapy aide performing patient related tasks, and the supervising physical therapist be readily available at ALL times to provide advice or instruction to the physical therapy aide.

The following definitions provide a clearer picture of what is meant by continuous, immediate supervision in proximity to the location where the physical therapy aide is performing patient related tasks.

- Continuous: Uninterrupted, unceasing
- Immediate: Occurring at once; without delay; instant
- Supervision: To look over, to see, to direct
- Proximity: Nearness, closeness, the fact of being near
- Readily: Promptly
- Available: Accessible for use, at hand

Therefore, in order to provide direction to the physical therapy aide, the supervising physical therapist would have to be near or close enough to provide advice or instruction instantly and without delay. While this may not require sharing the same treatment room with the physical therapy aide it does require the supervising physical therapist to be within an audible range that would ensure the instant presence of the supervising physical therapist.

It is the sole responsibility of the physical therapist to ensure the safety of the patient and the quality of care rendered. And, since the Physical Therapy Board of California licenses the physical therapist, not the physical therapy aide, it is the physical therapist that is held accountable if professional judgment is compromised.

*Adopted by the Practice Issues Committee on May 9, 2002*